



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

tried. That the "mystery" is well made was evidenced a short time since, when a London refiner purchased a small piece of it under the impression that it was pure metal. Some years ago, when drop-earrings were fashionable, it was quite a usual occurrence for ordinary pins to be inserted into the interior of the pendant, then for a little hot wax to be inserted to bind them and prevent them from rattling, and then for the goods to be either pledged or sold—if the latter, generally by weight. MONTEZUMA.

Dramatic Funnies.

Hamlet.—Good, my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?
Polonius.—My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet.

THIS is the month when the New York theatres are at their best. Having passed the Scylla of the Presidential election, and affrighted at the Charybdis of the Christmas holidays, the managers crowd on all sail in a desperate effort to escape loss. But their extremity is the public's opportunity. Seldom have we had in the metropolis so many different kinds of entertainments worth going to see.

All the theatres are now open and have shown us their programmes. The marked peculiarity of the season is the predominance of the foreign element. The American drama is going to the wall again, and the promise with which it began the theatrical year has not been fulfilled.

Curiously enough, in the midst of the political campaign, with hard times in Wall Street and general depression in business, the leading managers came to the conclusion that the public wanted to laugh. Why? I do not attempt to make clear the managerial logic. Perhaps it was based upon the principle of the Western hotel-keeper, who, having only one dish for breakfast, pointed a revolver at the head of his complaining guest and solemnly remarked, "Stranger, what you want is hash!"

Upon this theory, that what people wanted was to laugh, Manager Mallory, of the Madison Square, changed the whole policy of the theatre; banished the successful play, "May Blossom;" imported the London version of a German farce, "The Private Secretary;" gave a final rehearsal on a Sunday evening; allowed the actors to use profusely the profane word which is mentioned with horror in "Pinafore," and so altered the character, style, and morals of the entertainment that the regular attendants no longer know the place.

"The Private Secretary" is a very funny farce; but, like the primrose by the river's brim, it is nothing more. There is no serious interest to relieve the absurdity of the situations. You roar at it for two hours, and then go away and wonder what you have been laughing so heartily about.

You have been laughing about the miseries of an unhappy little curate, cleverly impersonated by Frank Thornton, an English comedian, who has been made the victim of all sorts of ridiculous mistakes and complications. You have been laughing at a clergyman of the Church of England.

"The Private Secretary" begins like the Charles Courtley episode in "London Assurance." A couple of men about town, in London, in debt and difficulties, take refuge at the country-house of a Max Harkaway, Squire, and one of them pretends to be the new secretary whom the Squire has engaged. A curate is the secretary really engaged, and the young fellows manoeuvre to keep him out of the way. The more the poor clergyman suffers the more the audience laugh. This is, indeed, a revolution for the Madison Square Theatre.

But the veteran Wallack is equally frivolous with "Nita's First." This, like "Confusion," is a farce about a baby, which is brought to the wrong house in a basket; left in a cab; sent to the police station, and only restored to its distracted parents when the audience are tired of screaming at its misadventures.

Thus two of our leading theatres are given up to English farces. At Daly's Theatre there is a German farce, "The Wooden Spoon," in which the interior of a morning newspaper office is supposed to be represented. For an American farce you must go to "Investigation," at the Theatre Comique.

Laughter, like hash, is a very good thing; but I

cannot believe that the public want so much of it. The drama is, after all, a serious business, and in management, as in novel writing, there is more money to be made by tears than smiles.

THE return of Henry Irving, Ellen Terry, and their London company to the Star Theatre gives emphasis to the thought that, even at the theatre, it is more profitable to exercise the intellect than to tickle the midriff. To sit through one of Mr. Irving's performances is an intellectual treat. There are brains in every part of it, from the leading actors to the lighting of the stage, from the management of the supernumeraries to the accompaniments of the orchestra.

At the new Lyceum Theatre, now being built on Fourth Avenue, under Steele Mackaye's superintendence, Mr. Mackaye aims to present to New York the same artistic representations for which Irving has become famous. He, too, takes serious views of his profession. He, too, puts brains into the work. In the long run this is better, even from a pecuniary point of view, than producing foreign farces.

The Union Square Theatre was opened with the new play of Elliott Barnes, an American dramatist, called "The Artist's Daughter." The action occurs in France, under the old régime; but it is an American play, nevertheless.

"Lynwood," by J. Tillotson, which filled out the preliminary season at the Union Square, would have been ten times more successful if its author had located it in foreign parts or put it back into some historical epoch, like the Revolution. The incidents were supposed to happen in Kentucky, during the Civil War, and our public are not yet ready for "Rebellion" plays, having too recently taken part in the real drama.

A Union officer falls in love with a Kentucky belle, who has a brother in the Confederate army. The lover and the brother meet, and the brother is killed, not by the lover, but by a Confederate rival. However, as the blow was struck in the dark, the lover accuses himself of being the murderer. The belle vows to kill the man who killed her brother. Her lover kneels at her feet and cries, "I am the man—kill me!" This is a strong dramatic situation; but the public missed the point of it, because they take no interest in theatrical stories of the Civil War.

Our American dramatists ought to accept the various hints given them and go abroad or into history for their subjects. The most successful American play ever written is "Hazel Kirke," and that is an English tale of the love of a lord and a miller's daughter.

DURING the last month the profession suffered three severe misfortunes. Frank Chanfrau died; John McCullough broke down, and Madame Janauschek quarrelled with the Herald, and published a pamphlet attacking that journal.

I cannot weep over Frank Chanfrau, who seemed to me to be dead professionally many years ago. He made his reputation by imitating on the stage the old New York Bowery boy, who has been for years as extinct as the dodo. He lived upon his reputation, and never, to my knowledge, acted anything else. His "Kit, the Arkansas Traveller," with which he toured the country, was simply melodramatic rubbish, and he walked through his part in it as if he felt as little interest in the medley of slang and red-fire as the intelligent portion of his audience.

John McCullough was a robust actor, who depended for his effects upon his physique. He had acted with Edwin Forrest, and he thought that he had discovered that the secret of Edwin Forrest's success was being big and strong and leonine. When his physique failed, he turned, as Forrest did, to study, and endeavored earnestly to supply the deficiencies of his early lack of education. But his mind could not endure the double strain of study and acting. After a year of struggle it gave way, and McCullough had to appeal to the kindness of a Chicago audience to forgive his weakness of body, his lapses of memory, and his imbecility.

Perhaps no man, on or off the stage, has more friends and warmer friends than John McCullough. His nature was so genial that everybody loved him. He was always ready to offer to do a kindness to anybody. It was almost impossible to criticise his acting impartially when one knew him personally.

McCullough had an extraordinary career. Born in Ireland, he was brought to Philadelphia by his parents and apprenticed to a chairmaker. He was fond of the theatre, and, one day, hearing that Neaffie, a carpenter, had become a star actor, he determined that a chairmaker should rise to a similar position. In time he worked up from the supernumerary ranks to be the leading man of Edwin Forrest's company; went with Forrest to California; made so many influential friends there that he was offered the management of the leading theatre of San Francisco; acted almost every line of parts in his own theatre, and emerged as a star, to be accepted with equal generosity by New York and London. During one of his summer trips abroad he was the guest of a nobleman at a castle in Ireland. He looked out of his window and saw, in the little village which nestled at the foot of the castle, the humble thatched cabin in which he was born. "Then," said he, "I realized, for the first time what I had done for myself, or rather what my friends had done for me." But his friends could have done nothing for him without good material upon which to work.

I add Janauschek to Chanfrau and McCullough, not humorously, but because the grand old actress takes her quarrel with The Herald so much to heart. She produced, at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, a very poor melodrama, called "My Life." The Herald said that the play was a disgrace to the stage, and advised the public not to go to see it. Hence the divine anger in Janauschek's Juno-like mind.

The Herald was right in its facts, but its language was coarse, harsh, and disrespectful to an actress of Janauschek's years and reputation. The trouble is that The Herald has no dramatic critic and that ordinary reporters are sent to write about the theatres. When a police-reporter catches a star with a bad play he naturally describes her as he would an old offender caught with a counterfeit bill or in the act of thieving. Just as naturally, the actress resents such treatment.

I hope that, as Janauschek has used as hard words in her pamphlet as The Herald used against her in "My Life," that she and the paper will now kiss and be friends again. But the quarrel will not be without its benefit if it should induce Mr. Bennett to intrust his criticisms to critics. He is altogether mistaken in his policy. He would not dream of applying it to any other department of his paper. Somebody once told him that all the critics were corrupt, and he resolved never to have a critic. But have financial writers, sporting writers, publishers, and even chief editors never been detected in corruption?

Apart from every other consideration—apart from the Art standpoint from which the profession ought to be judged—so much capital is now invested in theatrical affairs that they require to be treated by experts just as much as Wall Street or the turf.

JANISCH, a Vienna actress of position, has made her New York debut, in English, at the Park Theatre; but, having seen her in only one part, and that a bad one—the heroine of a stupid English version of Schiller's "Love and Intrigue"—I reserve my opinion as to her capabilities.

She is handsome; she knows the stage perfectly; but her voice is monotonous; her acting exaggerated; her performance hard, artificial, unsympathetic. But her faults may be occasioned by her strenuous effort to speak English intelligibly, and I wait to give her the chance to conquer a language which, on the first night, completely conquered her.

The Théo season of French opera, at Wallack's, was noticeable only for the production of two new operas, "Madame Boniface" and "Fanchon." The former was a comedy with occasional music. The latter was an echo of "La Fille de Madame Angot." The public took very little interest in Théo. They are waiting for Judic.

It is settled that the company engaged by Dr. Damrosch are to give us, not German opera, but opera in German, at the Metropolitan. By the same token, Colonel Mapleson is to offer, not Italian opera, but opera in Italian, at the Academy. German opera has its uses; but if we are to have operas which are not German, why not sing them in a language which is singable? Dr. Damrosch should have the courage of his convictions. Either our people are educated up to Wagner or they are not. If not, they do not want to hear "Il Trovatore," say, in German.

I cannot believe that the project to bring the Mexican opera troupe, which has made a success in San Francisco, on to New York will amount to anything. The star of the Mexican troupe is the tenor Giannini, who was heard here with Kellogg and found to be too loud—which is not a fault in California.

"The Beggar Student" has been revived at the Casino, Rudolph Aronson having triumphed over Colonel McCaull by the votes of the stockholders; but, without W. T. Carleton and Frederick Leslie in the cast, it can scarcely hope for its former success.

American opera, ignored by metropolitan managers, has taken refuge with the Musical Union of Watertown, N. Y. At Watertown "The Culpit Fay," based upon Drake's poem, the libretto by Judge Gedney and the music by Mr. Alden, of Boston, is to be produced, and the undertaking is in every way creditable to all concerned.

F. C. Burnand, the dramatist, humorist, and editor of *Punch*, writes me that he is thinking of coming over here to deliver a new "Happy Thought" lecture. The characteristic of most English readers is that they do not know how to read so that the audience can hear them; but Burnand is a capital actor, as much at home before the footlights as at his desk. His American tour is a very happy thought.

STEPHEN FISKE.

BOSTON ARCHITECTURE.

"BEAUTIFUL Boston" has a pleasing alliterative effectiveness, but it is a phrase not heard often except in the mouths of those whose normal state it is to sit and choir endlessly the praise of Boston—namely, the Bostonians themselves. Wherever two or three Bostonians are gathered together, whether on the lordly terrace of Beacon Hill or in exile in such fastnesses as Chicago and New York, or even amid æsthetic delights in Switzerland or Italy, one hears talk of the beautiful new Boston that is rising from the rich ooze of wealth that transcontinental railroads and Michigan mines have deposited around the little old peninsula whereon the British were cooped up for ten months after Bunker Hill and then quitted, driven out by Washington, after a possessorship of a century and a half, never to set foot upon it again. It is on this solid historical base, this sufficient proof of our sterner virtues, that we now recline somewhat at ease and adorn our classic capital. We feel that we have earned the right—we have done the state some service—and we have made some money.

I have said that as yet Boston is called beautiful mainly by the Bostonian, but there has been one conspicuous exception of late. Henry James, the Londoner (or is he Parisian? at any rate, not Bostonian), born in Albany and early transplanted to New York City (where, as he himself tells us, he felt no slightest local attachment, but sighed as a boy for the London of London Punch), missed the Bostonizing which the brothers and sisters of his gifted family have enjoyed, and which would have given him a peace (like that in Mother Church) he can now never know; but he is able, on this account, to show us, with a very intimate, if not sympathetic, insight, to ourselves as others see us. In his unique sketch in two recent numbers of the Century, "A New England Winter," he has given the "impression" of Boston of a young denationalized Impressionist like himself, kindly returning from Paris for a few months to lend himself to his mother and his native city as a special boon. "Florimond painted a few things while he was in America," says the story, "though he had told his mother he had come to rest; but when, several months later, in Paris, he showed his 'notes,' as he called them, to a friend, the young Frenchman asked him if Massachusetts were really so much like Andalusia. There was certainly nothing Andalusian in the prospect as Florimond traversed the artificial bosom of the Back Bay. He had made his way promptly into Beacon Street, and he greatly admired that vista. The long, straight avenue lay airing its newness in the frosty day, and all its individual façades, with their neat, sharp ornaments, seemed to have been scoured, with a kind of friction, by the hard, salutary light. Their brilliant browns and drabs, their rosy surfaces of brick, made a variety of fresh, violent tones, such as Florimond liked to memorize, and the large, clear windows of their curved fronts faced each other, across the street, like candid, inevitable eyes. . . . The upper part of

Beacon Street seemed to Florimond charming—the long, wide, sunny slope, the uneven line of the older houses, the contrasted, differing, bulging fronts, the painted bricks, the tidy facings, the immaculate doors, the burnished silver plates, the denuded twigs of the far extent of the Common on the other side; and to crown the eminence and complete the picture, high in the air, poised in the right place, over everything that clustered below, the most felicitous object in Boston—the gilded dome of the State House." Mr. James also paints the narrow and crowded shopping streets, so densely thronged with women that it seems as if there were a war and all the men had gone to it, and the suburb of Cambridge; but he entirely ignores the great double Commonwealth Avenue, with its miles of park between two roadways stretching across the "artificial bosom of the Back Bay," and eventually to reach Harvard over an ornamental viaduct across the Charles River. It is around this quarter that the hopes and expectations of "Beautiful Boston" cluster. But we cannot be too grateful that Mr. James allows his dainty Parisian Impressionist to admire the foundation that has come down to us in the old Common and the domed State House, dating from the last century, the work of Thomas Bulfinch, the author of the "Age of Fable" and architect of most of the old Beacon Hill mansions, which are even now really handsomer and more imposing than any of the new ones on the Back Bay. We may at least feel, now, that things are begun right.

For all the schemes for "Beautiful Boston," take the Common and adjoining Public Garden, with the gilded dome "high in air, poised in the right place" above them, as the starting place. The first stretch of the new Boston toward the west is indeed already an accomplished fact. What was only thirty years ago an expanse some two miles square of shallow tide-water, with but a railroad or two and a mill-dam shooting across it like the first rays of crystallization, is now the best part of the city, with real estate valued two years ago at more than \$50,000,000. The State has done the filling, and made over \$3,000,000 by the operation, besides adding all the beautiful avenues and squares to the public possessions. The original plan for this great improvement was the work of the late Arthur Gilman, the famous wit and "bon vivant," as well as architect. The planning of the works at present going on has been in the hands of Frederick Law Olmstead. Westward the line of beautifying improvement still takes its way. With the ground solid, now, all the way to Brookline, that "swell" suburb must next become the West End of Boston. Through this old town of Brookline, the historic banks of Muddy River, scene of many a skirmish with the Indians in early chronicles, are next to be converted into a drive. As the waters of the river are brought into the Back Bay improvement under a noble elevated terrace of brown stone, with a half a dozen splendid bridges crossing it, where the city avenues intersect it, from which will appear, according to Mr. Olmstead's design, the scenery of a winding creek with wide natural meadows, the drive-way will be continuous through elegant surroundings from the heart of the city to the shores of Jamaica Pond, which are public ground, and thence to the great country park, as yet in its natural state, in West Roxbury.

Another thirty years will undoubtedly see this noble plan accomplished, too, like the filling and building over of the Back Bay. Meanwhile there is under way the embankment of the Charles River along the finished district and its vis-à-vis across the river on the Cambridge side, which is undertaken by a corporation of wealthy capitalists as a private speculation. But these embankments will be but the trimmings and borders of an already very rich and beautiful range of streets. Built from the foundations of piling, within a quarter of a century or so, and most of it within five or ten years, the district is all new together and homogeneous, yet far from monotonous. A different principle has prevailed here from that in vogue when the residence quarters of New York were building during the same period. Here the long block of houses all alike is the exception. Each house is commonly complete in itself and of a character of its own, according to the taste and means of its builder. It has fortunately happened that simultaneously with this building of the new dwelling district has risen the new school of architects—not altogether because of the demand, for it is conceivable that but for the re-

vival of early forms and ideas of building there might have been set down here, row on row, a succession of streets as monotonous as London's or yours from Fourteenth to Fifty-fourth streets. Some influence, whether that of the Centennial Exhibition or of the English revival of art, has given us a new birth in taste. Naturally and fortunately the first expression of this new sense has been in the improvement of our houses and their decoration. Nowhere is this new start seen to better effect than in the homes lining the Back Bay avenues and cross streets; and with all the variety and originality of form and decoration there is, after all, almost nothing of vulgar sensationalism or grotesque and screaming oddity for the mere sake of oddity. It is remarkable how well we have escaped that misfortune, with all the old safe and standard conventionality out of fashion. Richardson, with his daring new departures, has had full swing here, and piled up some of his most massive and important works, both in private houses and public structures. But the score of young native architects who have been inspired by him into invention and adventure have kept their heads very well. One of the good and abiding results of the architectural revival in Boston is the Rotch prize for young architects, which permits the winner to go to Europe to travel and study, and links the family name of one of our most successful young architects with this monument of progress in the history of American arts. But the great memorial of the epoch is this new Boston itself, with its sumptuous and sound new house-building. The most surprised and delighted of those who see what has been done with old Boston are those returning to us or visiting us, to whom old Boston is near and dear. Julian Hawthorne, lately trying to identify the scenes of his father's romances, imagines Hester Prynne musing in her lonely cot beside the gray waters of the landlocked bay and amazed at a vision of Commonwealth Avenue rising from the waves. "Where," he exclaims, "in the harsh soil of Puritan asceticism, were the seeds hidden of all this present luxury and culture?"

As I write the town is dreadfully wrought up over the apparent carrying into execution of the long-pending threat to build an apartment house in Copley Square, the first-accomplished triumph of "Beautiful Boston." This is the noble square on which front the Museum of Fine Arts, Trinity Church, and the new Public Library, and from which are visible, near by, the two great buildings of the Institute of Technology and the Museum of Natural History, and the "New Old South," the Art Club, and other fine public buildings. It is a narrow flat-iron of land directly in front of Trinity and extending half the length of the Art Museum that is to be built over, to the just horror and indignation of all good Bostonians. It appears that the owner offered some years ago to sell it to Trinity Church for \$20,000. But it was believed by that corporation's lawyers that it was already public property, having been so laid out on a map of the land company which owned the Back Bay. That claim, however, has been thrown out by the courts, and the owner has now trebled his price, demanding \$60,000. Meanwhile, he has actually begun digging for the foundations and cellar of his projected building for bachelor apartments, and the anguish of all interested in the artistic and architectural glory of Boston can only be imagined. Agonized appeals are written to the journals calling for subscriptions toward buying off the hardened landowner. Ruskin would delight in the intensity of the popular indignation manifested in these communications, very much in his own vein of fervid protest against modern vulgarity and money-getting greed. A last stand has just been taken on a legal technicality which may interpose another delay of a few months, but it seems like a forlorn hope. The trouble with the plan of a subscription is that it is only a short time since another part of the same square was bought in that way, with the aid of an appropriation from the city treasury, and public spirit and liberality are about exhausted by that effort. It is certainly too bad that this new draft should have to be made in a year when nobody can feel much like giving. One writer proposes that every patron of the symphony concerts and opera this winter should put aside a proportionate sum for Copley Square, and perhaps something of this kind will be attempted.

GRETA,

BOSTON, October 4th, 1884.